

powders in a hot-water bath and boil one hour. Iodoform is difficult or impossible to sterilize by heat, too great heat decomposing it, setting the iodine free.

AN OPEN LETTER WITH ANSWER

DEAR MISS McISAAC:

I want to thank all you good women for giving us such a fine magazine as *THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING*. I am a subscriber, and am always trying to get others to join, as I think it is what we, as nurses, have long wanted. I would like to ask you some questions, and would so much like you to answer through the *JOURNAL*. I am a private nurse, graduate of the _____ Hospital in _____, and have been nursing for nine years. In all my reading I see so little in regard to the private nurse. All seems to be said for and of the nurse who works in hospitals or institutions of all kinds. No nurse, I think, shows her training and education more than the private nurse, for she really stands alone. All we ever see in print are such things as "The Private Nurse's Outfit," and "Prices of the Private Nurses." We all know that, but we crave more, and really deserve more recognition. I have always tried to keep in touch with all practical points in private nursing, but see so little in print. I have been trying for the last year to form an *alumnæ* association at our school, but have almost given up all hope of so doing, as the nurses seem so slow to grasp the advantages of such a step. I sincerely wish that you good women succeed in making it compulsory for all to join such associations. A private nurse, it seems to me, is so isolated in her work, that I think the people should be educated how to appreciate her, and also that all directories should be in her hands. We are an intelligent set of women, and should be able to govern ourselves. I am very anxious to attend the meetings that are to be held in Buffalo this September. How am I to do it if our school has not formed an *alumnæ*, so that I could be admitted as such? But as I am only a private nurse, will I be allowed to enjoy some benefit if I attend, or, in other words, would I be granted admission? The private nurses are just as anxious for organization as hospital nurses, and yet but little place or attention is given us. Why is it? Now, I would be so glad if you could answer us through the columns of the *JOURNAL*, and tell all private nurses why we are not given more recognition in the affairs of nursing. True, our time is more taken up. I would like to hear how others feel on the subject.

Very cordially yours,

A PRIVATE NURSE.

PRIVATE NURSES:

It should not be forgotten that new nursing methods originate largely in hospitals, where there is a congregation of patients, doctors, and nurses. This is quite natural, as the place and its conditions afford opportunity for observation and experiments which are out of the question in private duty. Again, quite naturally, these are written about by hospital doctors and nurses, which may account for some of that prominence of which you speak.

On the other hand, it would seem that every nurse engaged for any length of time in private duty must have much knowledge which if spread abroad would be of great value to others less experienced. From the stand-point of time the private nurse often has far more time than the nurse in a hospital, although it is irregular, but the *private nurse rarely offers to write*, and very often positively declines to add her quota to the general fund of information. I do not speak from hearsay, but from many rebuffs.

Take the department of the JOURNAL for which I have been trying to do something. It surely ought to be in the hands of a private-duty nurse; but of the thirty thousand trained nurses said to be in the United States I wish I could say that one private-duty nurse had volunteered a single word of information for the department. A large number have responded most cordially to my requests, for which I am profoundly grateful, but there is still a great army which might do so much, yet does not. If they would only signify their willingness to work, "recognition" would come so fast they would not know what to do with it, because, you know, "recognition" always means that *you must do more work*. I think all nurses agree with your idea about the *alumnæ* societies being the solution of the problem, for in them lies our professional salvation. You say that the private nurse is as anxious for organization as the hospital nurse," which I do not quite understand, or else you do not quite grasp the *alumnæ* association idea. The local and associated *alumnæ* societies are composed of fully nine-tenths private nurses, but from experience and hearsay I know that it is often impossible to persuade the private nurse to serve in a working capacity in the local societies, the plea always being lack of time. In many instances members in hospital positions are obliged to fill these places or the society disbands. I do think that the superintendents have much to answer for in regard to *alumnæ* organizations, as far too many of them are indifferent to the welfare of the societies and take no pains to instruct their senior pupils in the value the *alumnæ* association will be to them when they are no longer in the school. I disapprove very strongly of the superintendent being president of the *alumnæ* associa-

tion, but I think it is one of her duties to organize it and get the senior nurses ready for it, and to help, encourage, and advise in every possible way. If any nurse needs reasons for belonging to such an organization, let her read carefully Miss Dock's fine paper upon "What Will the Associated Alumnæ do for Me?" in the November JOURNAL. The very fact that the private nurse is so isolated makes it more important that she should take an active interest in all these public movements. There is not a woman in the nursing profession in America to-day of any recognized ability who has not labored long and hard, not for "recognition," but because she recognized a field crying out for laborers.

In regard to the directories being in the hands of the private-duty nurses, I agree with you perfectly. This plan is being adopted in many cities; not always successfully, but it will no doubt gradually become established generally. The difficulty has been and will be the same as I spoke of in the alumnæ associations, namely, in getting private nurses to assume the financial as well as the professional responsibility of this management, because a directory cannot be managed on good-will alone; it needs money and good business capacity to make it successful. A directory which is a part of its school can be run much more economically than when independent, the latter having many expenses, such as rent, telephone, board, etc., which are purely nominal when connected with a school.

The International Congress of Nurses at Buffalo will be open to all nurses, whether they be members of an organization or not, only the executive sessions will be for accredited delegates alone. A small admission fee will be charged all American nurses to help defray the many expenses.

The simple sum and substance of what I have tried to say is just, *work*, and I do assure you, my dear Private Nurse, that if you will only show your willingness to carry some of the load, the other toilers will joyfully embrace you and all your kind with glad and grateful hearts. I, for instance, am anxious to put myself under obligation to you for suggestions and information in practical points on private nursing in THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING, and I truly hope to hear from you individually and collectively.

Very cordially yours,

ISABEL McISAAC.

